



Water is one of Arizona's most precious resources, and conserving it is critical for sustaining communities, landscapes, and quality of life in an arid climate. With recurring droughts, high temperatures, and growing population demands, community associations, schools, parks, golf courses, and other turf-related facilities play an important role in responsible water use. By implementing strategic conservation measures and complying with state regulations, associations can help protect water supplies, reduce costs, and promote environmental stewardship.

ADWR Regulations Overview

Under ARS 45-566, the Arizona Department of Water Resources (ADWR) regulates water use for turf-related facilities that have 10 or more acres of turf or lakes. Covered facilities include cemeteries, golf courses, parks, schools, and HOA common areas that meet this threshold. ADWR assigns a conservation allotment through its Industrial Conservation Program, calculated based on reported acreage of turf, low-water landscaping, and surface water, using prescribed application rates for each.

Facilities are required to submit new acreage documentation within 90 days of landscape watering or notice from ADWR. Municipalities may also designate individual facilities to allow direct contact between ADWR and the HOA for reporting purposes. Understanding these requirements ensures compliance and helps facilities manage water usage effectively.

- Choose low-water landscaping: Use drought-tolerant grasses, ground covers, shrubs, and trees; minimize turf areas.
- Group plants by water needs: Zone landscaping so irrigation is efficient and targeted.
- Prune appropriately for desert plants: Prune trees and shrubs only as needed and at the proper time of year to maintain plant health and reduce stress.
- Use efficient irrigation systems: Install drip irrigation; regularly inspect sprinklers, hoses, connectors, and timers for leaks or malfunctions.
- Water smartly: Water deeply but less frequently, only when needed, and during early morning hours to reduce evaporation.
- Prevent water waste: Adjust sprinklers to avoid watering streets, sidewalks, and buildings.
- Reduce evaporation and runoff: Apply 2–3 inches of mulch and aerate lawns so soil absorbs water effectively.
- Adapt to weather conditions: Track rainfall, adjust seasonal watering schedules, and shut off systems during rain or use rain sensors.
- Reuse and capture water: Collect rainwater, direct downspouts to landscaping, and reuse evaporative cooler bleed-off water.
- Maintain healthy landscapes: Weed regularly and avoid over-fertilizing, which increases water demand and pollution.



- Conserve beyond landscaping: Sweep hard surfaces instead of hosing, use pool covers and recirculating pumps, and choose water-recycling car washes.

Indoor Water Use

- Fix leaks promptly: Regularly check faucets, pipes, and toilets; repair or replace leaking components.
- Upgrade toilets: Replace older high-volume toilets with 1.6 gpf or high-efficiency/dual-flush models.
- Detecting hidden toilet leaks: Use a simple food-coloring test to identify tank leaks and replace flappers or valves as needed.
- Use appliances efficiently: Run dishwashers and washing machines only with full loads or adjust settings for smaller loads.
- Choose water-saving appliances: Select ENERGY STAR® or water-efficient models when replacing fixtures or appliances.
- Reduce sink water use: Avoid running water when hand-washing dishes or produce; use basins and reuse water for plants.
- Install efficient fixtures: Use faucet aerators, low-flow showerheads, and flow restrictors.
- Shorten showers: Keep showers under five minutes and consider hot-water recirculation systems to reduce waste.
- Improve hot-water efficiency: Insulate hot-water pipes and reuse water while waiting for it to heat.
- Manage specialty systems wisely: Limit garbage disposal use, optimize water softeners and RO systems, and turn treatment units off while on vacation.

Additional Resources and Rebate Programs

Many Arizona cities offer water conservation programs, rebates, and incentives for both residential and community landscapes (and the reset for funding each year is usually July 1). These programs may include rebates for turf replacement, irrigation upgrades, rainwater harvesting systems, or water-efficient appliances. Associations are encouraged to contact their city or local water provider to learn about available resources, eligibility requirements, and application processes. Participation in these programs can provide significant cost savings while further promoting environmental stewardship.

Conclusion and Takeaways

Water conservation is essential for Arizona communities, both for regulatory compliance and long-term sustainability. Associations that proactively manage water use through efficient landscaping, irrigation practices, and indoor water-saving strategies can reduce operational costs, maintain healthy landscapes, and minimize environmental impact. Understanding ADWR reporting requirements and aligning practices with state guidelines ensures compliance and positions communities for long-term success.



By implementing thoughtful conservation measures, staying informed about local programs and rebates, and educating residents, associations can play a meaningful role in preserving Arizona's water resources for current and future generations.